

February 29, 2016

Bill Honig and Nancy McTygue, Co-Chairs
History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee
Instructional Quality Commission
1430 N Street, Suite #5111
Sacramento, CA 95814
Submitted via Email: hssframework@cde.ca.gov

RE: Comments on the Draft History-Social Science Framework Related to the FAIR Education Act

Dear Co-Chairs Honig and McTygue:

I am a life long educator and founder of FAIR Classrooms (FAIRclassrooms.com) a project that helps California Schools integrate LGBTQ materials into their history and social studies classes. Through my work with students and teachers over the past 6 years, I have seen the positive impacts inclusive curricula have on all students' lives. The positive impacts are not just for students who identify as LGBTQ – inclusive curricula are relevant and meaningful for all students. We live in media saturated age where all young people are surrounded by complicated information about sexual identity and gender. History classes with well developed inclusive curricula give young people the context and grounding they need to understand these issues. That allows them to form their own, mature perspectives and beliefs.

I have been following the progress of the History-Social Studies Framework and been impressed with the excellent, thorough work your committee has done. It is clear that you have made an effort to implement the legislative intent behind the FAIR Education Act by including key LGBT historical figures, a number of essential moments in the struggle for LGBT equality, and the evolution of LGBT communities and identities. Your inclusion of LGBT Americans and matters of LGBT equality in multiple grade levels throughout the elementary, middle, and high school grades will give students the time to absorb the information and see that this history is part of our society. The revisions you have made, which reflect the current scholarship on LGBT history, show the dedication to academic excellence that makes California a national leader in creating schools that reflect our diverse world.

There are some additional edits I would like to suggest to accomplish the following:

1. Ensuring students gain an intersectional understanding of LGBT identities, communities, and social movements with regard to gender and race over time. This includes discussions about third gender roles among some Native Californian or Early American tribes and the effects of colonization as well as a reference to the ways different social movements, such as the LGBT movement, have informed each other in the course description for Ethnic Studies in 9th grade.

Teaching on these topics for the past 6 years, I have found these two elements are crucial for students' understanding. The Native cultures with third genders help students understand what a culture looks like when people can follow their own gender expression. They see that the culture is different but fully functional and even benefits.

The intersectional understanding of communities is essential to help students see that diversity in gender and sexuality is an aspect of all races and cultures. Because the media offers a narrow window of who is gay, lesbian, bi or trans, many students perceive these issues as “white” issues or as something outside of their culture’s history. I have seen time and again how including information from diverse cultures opens up students’ understanding about the history of LGBTQ people in their cultures.

In my experience, the inclusion of social movements is central to the FAIR Act’s intent. Historical social movements show LGBTQ people having agency, working for a better, more just world for everyone. It helps to correct the implicit story of victimization and passivity that many people have, in both the straight and LGBTQ community. Showing the history of LGBTQ leadership in the broad range of social justice movements – from Bayard Rustin in the Civil Rights Movement to Susan B. Anthony in the Suffrage Movement – also broadens students’ appreciation of the role that LGBTQ people have played in shaping our society and their lives.

2. Providing a concrete, age-appropriate example of a book about LGBT families in 2nd grade.
3. Using consistent language and modern terminology when referring to LGBT Americans, and removing any references to the term “homosexuals.”

Therefore, below is a list of proposed edits, including chapter, page, and line number.

Chapter	Grade	Page	Our Suggested Line Edit
Chapter 5	2	p. 62	Line 49, add: “ <i>In Our Mother's House</i> by Patricia Polacco”
Chapter 7	4	p. 90	Line 156, insert: “By exploring Native Californian cultures, students also learn that some tribes accepted third gender roles for females who assumed men’s social roles and males who assumed women’s social roles. Teachers can discuss how tribes such as the Klamath, Tolowa, Yuki, Gabrielino, and Chumash recognized males who preferred to dress and live as women and, in some cases, women who dressed and lived as men.

			Some Californian tribes granted such people important spiritual and social roles, sometimes including marriage.”
Chapter 7	4	p. 94	Lines 247-249, revise to: “Moreover, the imposition of forced labor, <u>Spanish cultural beliefs,</u> and highly structured living arrangements <u>negatively impacted scores of communities by degrading individuals, constraining families, circumscribing Native culture, and negatively impacted scores of communities</u> and trying to eliminate diverse indigenous gender identities and practices.”
Chapter 7	4	p. 95	Line 257, revise and insert: “...fleeing from the padres. To exemplify Native Californian resistance, teachers and students could explore the well-documented 18th-century case of a Chumash male-to-female person who, after Santa Clara Mission friars ordered them to give up women's clothing and work, ran away from the Mission and resumed a third-gender role acceptable within their tribe. A few Indians openly revolted...”
Chapter 8	5	p. 126	Line 93, insert: “Students also learn how many American Indian tribes included those referred to by modern Native communities and scholars as two-spirits. These individuals were believed to manifest both masculine and feminine spirits and had distinct social roles that varied from tribe to tribe. These included healing, transmission of oral traditions and histories, fortune-telling, match-making, and the conferring of names.”
Chapter 12	8	p. 363-364	Lines 932-941, reorder and revise to: “The American Indian wars, the creation of the reservation system, the development of federal Indian boarding schools, and the re-allotment of Native lands profoundly altered Native American social systems related to governance, family diversity, and gender diversity. Reading Chief Joseph’s words of surrender to U.S. Army troops in 1877 helps students grasp the heroism and human tragedy that accompanied the conquest of this last frontier. Allotment entailed breaking up Native lands into privately held units (largely based on the Anglo-American model of the male-headed nuclear family)-, <u>displacing elements of female and two-spirit authority traditionally respected in many tribal societies.</u> Boarding schools in the late 19 th

			and early 20 th centuries took Native children from their parents for years at a time, <u>imposing Christianity, U.S. gender binaries and social roles, and English-only education in order</u> an attempt to make them into <u>what school administrators viewed as proper U.S. citizens.</u> ”
Chapter 14	9	p. 416	Line 700, insert: “...and they can study how different social movements for people of color, women, and LGBT communities have mutually informed each other.”
Appendices	n/a	p. 900	Lines 1425-1429 should be revised to read: “Some western societies are still struggling with areas of civil rights that remain unresolved, such as marriage rights, <u>nondiscrimination protections</u> , and other issues of equality for their <u>lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender</u> citizens, but they can still provide leadership in applying global pressure against regimes that even in the twenty-first century mandate harsh penalties and sometimes even death against homosexuals <u>lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.</u> ”

Again, thank you for the extensive edits related to the roles and contributions of LGBT people that you have included in this latest draft of the History-Social Science Framework. I appreciate your consideration of these remaining suggestions, which will help to ensure implementation of the FAIR Education Act and reflect the diversity of California’s past as well as its present and future student and family population.

Sincerely,

Will Grant
Founder, FAIR Classrooms